



## Preface

The 15th International Symposium on Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Analysis (PBA 2004) was held for the first time in Florence (Italy) from 2 to 6 May 2004. Successful Symposia in this series have succeeded from 1987 in creating a very friendly atmosphere with the participation of a lot of internationally recognized scientists. The aim of the Symposium series was to provide a forum for high-level scientific exchanges between analytically oriented scientists from every corner of the world. The scientific programme featured eight invited plenary and 25 keynote lectures and a considerable number (34) of oral communications. In the programme, ample time was scheduled for two distinct poster sessions with the presentation of about 400 posters.

The Scientific Committee of the PBA 2004, after a proposal by the Chairman Prof. Sergio Pinzauti, decided unanimously to recognize Prof. Sandor Görög (Budapest, Hungary) with an award for his numerous years of substantial scientific contributions to the field of pharmaceutical and biomedical analysis and his active participation in the many years of PBA history. The award, an engraved silver plaque, was given to Prof. Görög during the opening ceremony (Sunday, 2 May 2004) in the magnificent “Salone dei Cinquecento” in Palazzo Vecchio, the town hall of Florence. This historically significant hall, enriched by Renaissance statuary and frescoes, was full of more than 550 delegates to the congress, making this edition of PBA the most successful in terms of participation. The opening ceremony continued with a conference by Prof. Ivano Bertini (University of Florence) on “Frontiers in drug discovery in the post genomic era”, and was concluded by a concert by the University of Florence wind instruments orchestra and a welcome reception held in the frescoed courtyard of Palazzo Vecchio.

Starting from Monday 3 May, for 4 days, a nicely balanced scientific programme was presented in the Auditorium, Green Room and Gallery of the Congress Centre. The programme reflected the current main scientific themes: advanced chiral recognition, advanced in enantiomeric separations, predominant hyphenated and hyperhyphenated methods, high-throughput determination of drugs and metabolites in biosamples, the post-genomic revo-

lution of metabonomics, high-speed high-throughput screening of biomolecules, chemometrics, quality management, modern analytical tools in the analysis of natural products, the doping versus anti-doping match, microchips in bioanalysis, preparation and characterisation of new chromatographic stationary phases, sample preparation techniques, various aspects of quantitative structure–chromatographic retention relationship and analytical aspects of dosage forms optimization. These different themes are represented in the present issue in which a large number of the presented papers are brought together.

Florence provided a wonderful environment for PBA 2004. The city, with its extremely rich artistic heritage, has always been a source of attraction for international conference tourism. Just outside the meeting rooms of the Congress Centre, where the meeting was held, the delegates were already in the heart of the city: a beautiful open sky museum where magnificent Italian Renaissance masterpieces could be discovered in every corner, just by taking a short and pleasant walk. The Congress Centre itself is an 18th century villa equipped with modern facilities among the ancient walls. The social programme and the accompanying persons programme were also highly enjoyable, including the delicious banquet and music in Palazzo Corsini, a 17th century frescoed building on the banks of the river Arno.

The next Symposium in this series will be held in Baltimore (USA), at the end of August to beginning of September 2005 under the co-chairmanship of Prof. John Stobaugh (University of Kansas) and Dr. Henk Lingeman (Free University of Amsterdam).

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